



THE MAX



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story & art

SAM KIETH

swell dialogue

BILL MESSNER-LOEBS

finishes

JIM SINCLAIR

lettering

MIKE HEISLER

color

STEVE OLIFF

and OLYOPTICS

logo

CHANCE WOLF

film output

KELL-O-GRAPHICS

OLYOPTICS:

Tracey Anderson, Brec Blackford, Albert Calleros,
Cathy Enis, Nathan (Gnatus) Eyring, Michael Jeremiah,
Patti Stratton Jordan, Jennifer McFadden,
Marie St. Clair, Chris Wolfe, and Quinn Supplee.

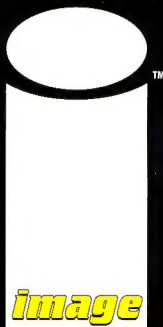
FOR IMAGE COMICS

Executive Director:
LARRY MARDER
Publisher:
TONY LOBITO
Art Director:
DOUG GRIFFITH
Production Manager:
TERESA CESPEDES

Distribution:
GERMAINE ZACHARIAH
Traffic:
RONNA COULTER
Graphic Design:
KENNY FELIX
Asst. to Exec. Director:
KELLY VAN LANDINGHAM

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HOW
COULD
YOU?

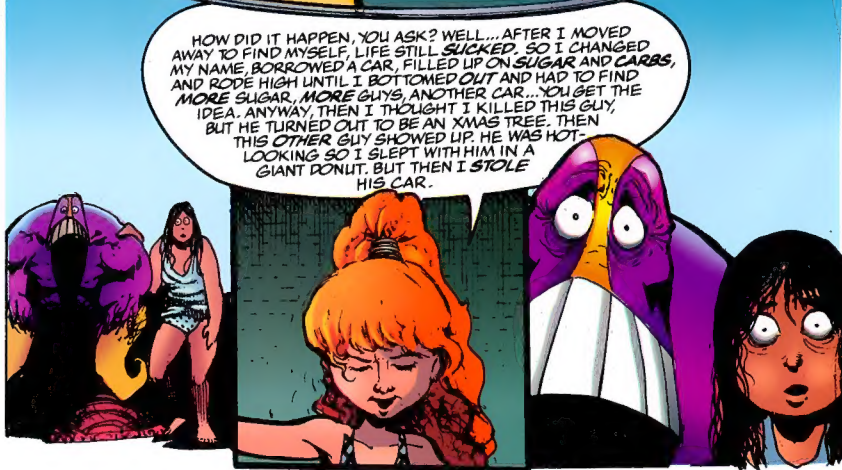


Um, YOU,
JULIE. YOUR
HAIR. IT'S...

FORGET
HER HAIR.
WHAT ABOUT
HER...



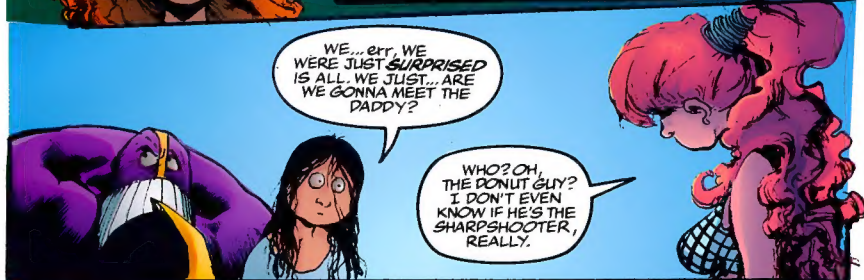
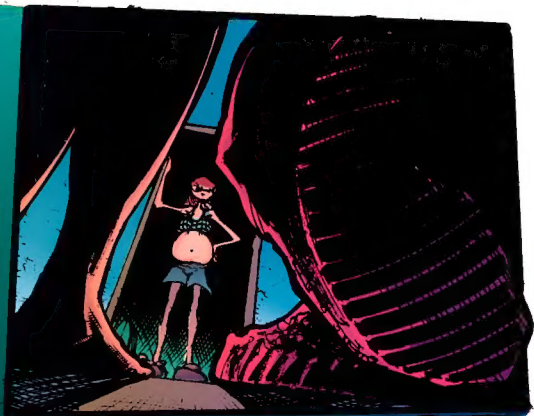
IT'S CALLED
A BELLY MAXX.
AND IT FEELS AS
BIG AS A
HOUSE!



HOW DID IT HAPPEN, YOU ASK? WELL... AFTER I MOVED
AWAY TO FIND MYSELF, LIFE STILL SUCKED. SO I CHANGED
MY NAME, BORROWED A CAR, FILLED UP ON SUGAR AND CARBS,
AND RODE HIGH UNTIL I BOTTOMED OUT AND HAD TO FIND
MORE SUGAR, MORE GUYS, ANOTHER CAR... YOU GET THE
IDEA. ANYWAY, THEN I THOUGHT I KILLED THIS GUY,
BUT HE TURNED OUT TO BE AN XMAS TREE. THEN
THIS OTHER GUY SHOWED UP. HE WAS HOT-
LOOKING SO I SLEPT WITH HIM IN A
GIANT DONUT. BUT THEN I STOLE
HIS CAR.

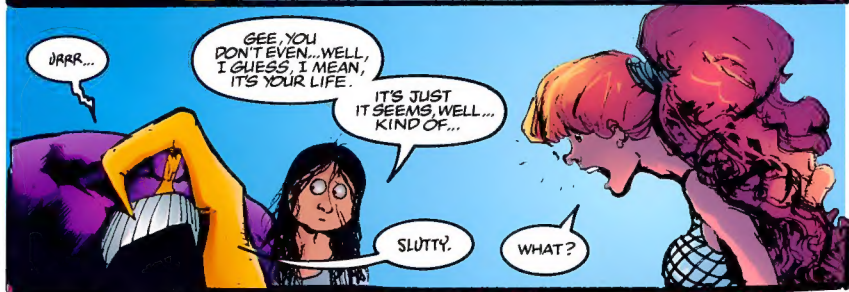


I'M KNOCKED
UP, ENCLIENTE, WITH
CHILD. PREGGERS.
ISN'T ANYONE GONNA
SAY ANYTHING?



WE...err, WE
WERE JUST **SURPRISED**
IS ALL. WE JUST... ARE
WE GONNA MEET THE
DADDY?

WHO? OH,
THE DONUT GUY?
I DON'T EVEN
KNOW IF HE'S THE
SHARPSHOOTER,
REALLY.



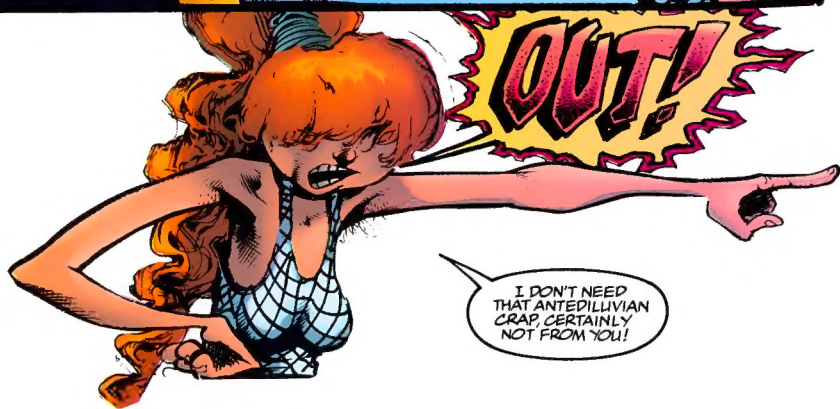
JARR...

GEE, YOU
DON'T EVEN...WELL,
I GUESS, I MEAN,
IT'S YOUR LIFE.

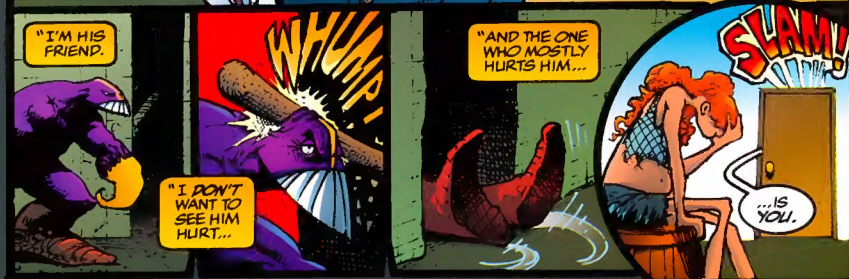
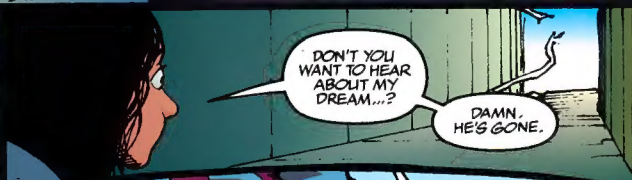
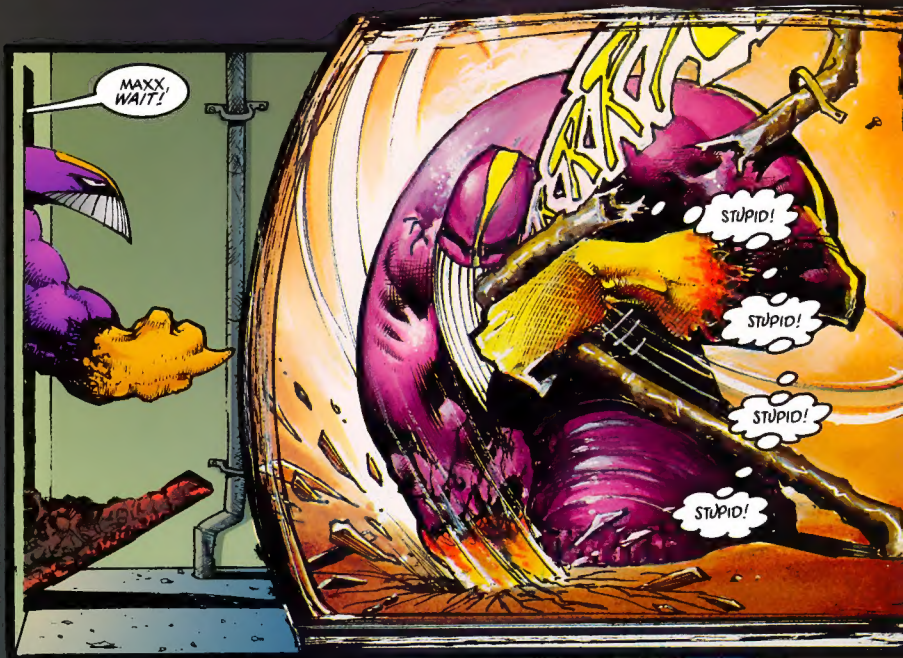
IT'S JUST
IT SEEMS, WELL...
KIND OF...

SLUTTY.

WHAT?



I DON'T NEED
THAT ANTEDEILUVIAN
CRAP, CERTAINLY
NOT FROM YOU!





I'VE BEEN
TO PARADISE,
BUT I'VE NEVER
BEEN TO ME...

HEY LADY,
YOU KNOW WHAT
PARADISE IS?

IT'S AN
ILLUSION.

AND YOU
KNOW WHAT
REALITY IS?

IT'S YOUR
HUSBAND.

THE ONE
YOU FOUGHT
WITH THIS
MORNING...

...THE SAME
ONE YOU'RE GOING
TO MAKE LOVE TO
TONIGHT.

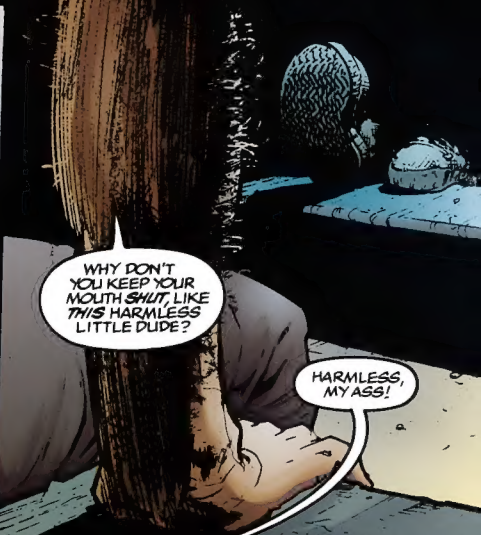
THAT'S
TRUTH...

SHUT UP
MAN! YOU'RE
DRIVIN' ME
NUTS!



HEY MAN,
THAT'S A
FRIGGIN'
GREAT
SONG!

NOT WHEN
YOU SING IT,
IT AIN'T!



WHY DON'T
YOU KEEP YOUR
MOUTH SHUT, LIKE
THIS HARMLESS
LITTLE DUDE?

HARMLESS,
MY ASS!



THERE'S A
BUNCH O' THESE
CREEPY LITTLE
GUYS ALL OVER
TOWN, IF YOU
KNOW WHERE
T' LOOK.

THEY LOOK
HUMAN, BUT
THEY'RE
NOT.



THEY C'N
CHANGE SHAPE...
EAT THINGS...
BUT IF YOU'RE
INTERESTED,
I MIGHT KNOW
A WAY TO--

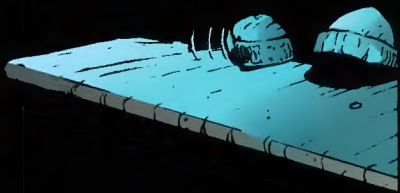
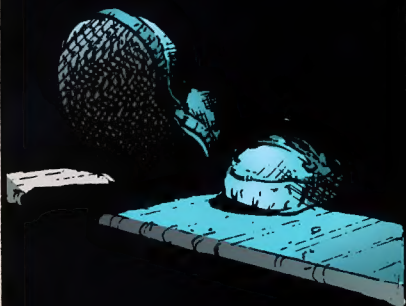


SHUT
UP!

HEY...



...WHAT
THE HELL ARE
YOU LOOKIN'
AT?



Sooner or later,
you're gonna have
to let your fears
out of the jar.



Well, Julia's
gone nuts...

And Maxx
has run off
someplace...

I guess I'll just
sit here and listen
to the confessions
of my outlaw dad.

I've been
putting it off,
and it's not
like I really
care...

Still...hey,
why isn't
there any
SOUND?

NO!

How could I DO
that? How much
did I record over?

...SPLIT THE
TURNIP. WOW, HONEY,
I NEVER TOLD ANYONE
ABOUT THAT.

I GUESS NOW
YOU CAN REALLY
UNDERSTAND THE
REST OF IT...ANY-
WAY, I WAS BORN
IN OHIO...



HEY,
MAXX.

I KNOW
YOU'RE IN THERE.
I CAN HEAR
YOUR LABORED
BREATHING!

LOOK, YOU
CAN'T HIDE OUT
FOREVER! YOU
KNOW THAT. JULIE
NEEDS US NOW.

OH, SURE.
SHE ACTS TOUGH...
SHE ACTS
EXTREME...

WHAT AM I
SAYING? SHE IS EXTREME!
SHE QUIT HER JOB, QUIT US,
COMMITTED CRIMES, USED
GUYS LIKE WE USE PARK-
ING METERS, GOT HERSELF
PREGNANT...

AND YOU CAN'T TELL
ME THAT WAS AN ACCIDENT,
EITHER! NO-YIPPEE-SIREE!
IT'S JUST ANOTHER ONE OF
HER HEAD GAMES TO TEST
US AND MAKE US CRAZY
AND... AND...

WHERE
WAS I?



OH,
YEAH.

BUT WE CAN'T
SHUT HER OUT. THERE'S
THE BABY, FOR ONE THING,
AND JULIA DOES
NEED US.

SHE MAKES ME
FURIOUS TOO. YOU
CALLED HER A... A
SLUT AND I CAN'T
HELP IT, I SORT OF
FEEL THAT WAY
TOO.

THIS'LL BE
ONE MORE THING
I CAN BEAT MY-
SELF UP ABOUT.

IT'S NOT
HIP AND I KNOW
IT'S KINDA A
DOUBLE STANDARD
BUT SHE'S NOT EVEN
SORRY! I MEAN, ISN'T
SHE SUPPOSED TO
GROVEL A LITTLE
AND APOLOGIZE
TO US?

SAY
SOMETHING,
FOR GOD'S
SAKE!

FINE! SHUT
ME OUT TOO. OUR
LIVES ARE FALLING
APART HERE AND YOU
DON'T EVEN CARE. SOME
STINKIN' SUPER HERO
YOU TURNED OUT
TO BE!

AND NOW
YOU MADE
ME ANGRY.
JUST
GREAT.

MOAN

SARAH, WAIT...

MUGGED...

GET...
HELP...



A comic book panel showing Spider-Man in a striped shirt and shorts, crouching on a concrete ledge. He is looking down towards a prison area below. The background is a bright orange and yellow sky. Below the ledge is a blue-tinted area representing a body of water or a prison courtyard, with a dark silhouette of a building or fence in the foreground.

DON'T SNEAK
UP ON ME, YOU
LITTLE...

MESS
YOU UP
BAD...

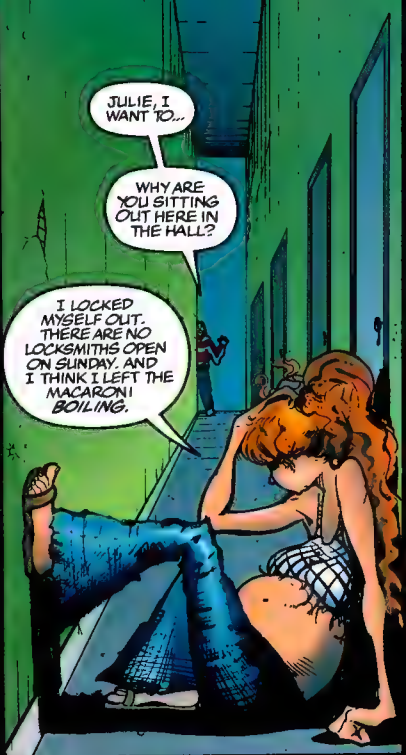
YOU HEAR
ME? YOU DON'T
SCARE ME WORTH
SHIT.

I TOLD
YOU NOT TO
FALL--

SHUT
UP!

OKAY...
TELL
ME.

TOO
LATE,
LITTLE
LADY.

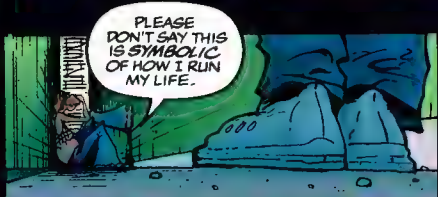


JULIE, I
WANT TO...

WHY ARE
YOU SITTING
OUT HERE IN
THE HALL?

I LOCKED
MYSELF OUT.
THERE ARE NO
LOCKSMITHS OPEN
ON SUNDAY, AND
I THINK I LEFT THE
MACARONI BOILING.

HE'S GONE,
MAYBE FOR
GOOD.



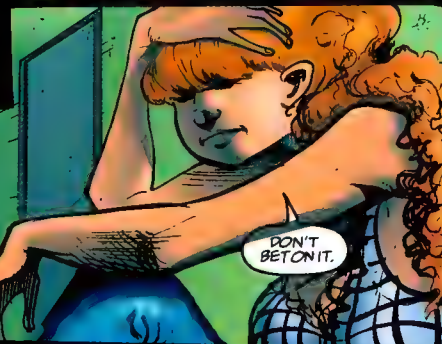
PLEASE
DON'T SAY THIS
IS SYMBOLIC
OF HOW I RUN
MY LIFE.



OKAY,
I WON'T. BUT
IT IS.



THANK
YOU, WHERE'S
MAXX?




DON'T
BET ON IT.



AND HERE'S
A WORD OF ADVICE
YOU PROBABLY
WON'T LISTEN TO:
DON'T WASTE TOO
MUCH SYMPATHY
ON ME OR MAXX.
YOU'LL ONLY GET
HURT.

I DON'T
GET HURT.

SAYS THE
WOMAN WHO'S
ONE BIG EXPOSED
NERVE END!




SARAH, ONLY A FOOL WOULD GET HURT OVER SOMETHING THAT'S NOT ABOUT HER. IT'S BETWEEN ME AND MAXX.

REMEMBER, I'M THE ONE WHO INVENTED NOT GETTING HURT.



WOW. I'M IMPRESSED.

HEY, DID YOU JUST CALL ME A "WOMAN"?



WELL, YOU'RE HARDLY A CHILD. I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF YOU AS MATURE, AND TOUGH ENOUGH TO HANDLE ALL OF THIS, SARAH. AND AFTER WHAT I SAW THIS MORNING...

I MEAN A LOT OF IMMATURE PEOPLE HAVE SEX. THAT'S NOT THE POINT. MAXX IS A GOOD GUY AND IT'S OBVIOUS THAT YOU'VE MADE CHOICES ABOUT WHO AND WHAT YOU WANT IN YOUR LIFE...

OH, THAT. UH, ACTUALLY MAXX AND I AREN'T AS... AS SERIOUS AS IT MAY HAVE LOOKED...



NOT SERIOUS? IT WAS JUST SEX? THAT WEASEL-LY LITTLE... YOU'RE JUST A CHILD!

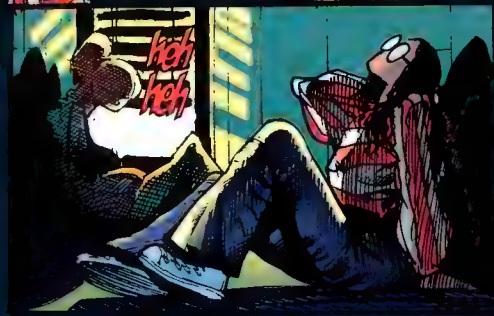
VERY FUNNY! ANYWAY, I'M NOT THE ONE COMING OFF A SIX-MONTH LOVE BINGE!

YOU REALLY SLEPT WITH A GUY AND THEN STOLE HIS CAR?



HA HA
HA HA

HA HA
HA HA



I CAN'T
BELIEVE YOU
LEFT US.





SO
WHEN ARE
YOU DUE?

ANOTHER
MONTH, GIVE
OR TAKE.



WELL... I
GUESS I CAN'T
STAY MAD AT YOU
FOREVER.



YOU MEAN YOU'VE
DECIDED TO "FORGIVE"
ME FOR BEING A
FALLEN WOMAN.
LUCKY ME.

MAYBE I
JUST DECIDED
TO LIVE MY LIFE
AND NOT CARE
WHAT ANYBODY
THINKS.



SO WHAT
DO YOU THINK,
SERIOUSLY?



JUST SPIT
IT OUT. I CAN
TAKE IT. THE
TRUTH.



SLUT.



BONK

I GREW UP PARTLY
IN A WOMAN'S LESBIAN
COLLECTIVE AND PART-
LY WITH TWO STEPDADES
NAMED BUZZ AND
STEVE.

SO,
YOU SEE,
BY THOSE
STANDARDS...

HEE HEE HEE
HEE HEE HEE
HEE HEE HEE
HEE HEE HEE

NOW I'M GOING TO HAVE TO KILL YOU!

GEE YOU W ANY UN ANGER WORK

TICKLE
TICKLE

GEE, SARAH,
YOU WOULDN'T HAVE
ANY UNRESOLVED
ANGER YOU'RE STILL
WORKING THROUGH.

IGIVEIGIVE
IGIVEIGIVEIGIVE!
YOU AREN'T A
SLUT!

SAY IT!
SAY IT!

YES, I AM.
AT LEAST, I ACTED
SLUTTISH. NOBODY'S
PERFECT. I'M A SLUT.
MAXX IS A LUNEY-TOON.
AND YOU'RE THE DAUGH-
TER OF A MASS
MURDER--



Oops.
THAT DIDN'T
COME OUT...



SARAH,
WAIT.



DAMN.





GET Y'R
TAIL IN THERE,
MADDOG!



AND DON'T GET
TOO COMFORTABLE
ON THAT COT. THE LAST
GUY IN HERE UP AN'
DIED ON IT!



DO YOU
KNOW WHAT
PARADISE
IS...?



SARAH...

COME BACK...

MUGGED...



SO, THE THING
IS... I'VE DRIVEN AWAY
EVERYBODY WHO EVER
CARED ABOUT ME.
SARAH, MAXX, THE
DONUT GUY, EVEN MY
SHRINK HATES ME.
:sigh:

WELL, KID,
I GUESS IT'S
JUST YOU AND
ME.





THE MAXX trade paperback (Issues #1-6 plus Darker Image MAXX story) is on the stands as we speak. Check it out. Sometime in the future we'll collect the first 20 issues, plus Wiz 1/2 and everything else.

Heather Barnes of Tempe (among others) writes in to say that this is her second letter, not printed, and do we read 'em? The answers: Good, sorry, yes: keep writing, sorry we can't print 'em all, yes we do read 'em--every one! If you want to know what I think about the fans, see my interview in the latest issue of *Inside Image*.

Some Armature (see Issue 14) fans:

Dear Sam Kieth and Steve Oliff,

Armature looks wicked and he's quickly becoming one of my favorite characters. Is he going to have his own series? I hope so.

Chris P. Routt
Del City, OK

Dear Sam,

I loved the Armature dude by Steve Oliff. Will there be a series of 'em, or what?

Sean Lovely
Colorado Springs, CO

Steve is very serious about doing his own Armature comic; we'll let you know as soon as he coughs up enough pages to do that.

Armature means a lot to Steve, and I'm sure he's grateful that people "get it."

Screw-ups for the month (maybe this oughta be a feature):

- (1) By the time you read this, Maxx will already have been on MTV, but NOT on the 27th (MTV decided not to compete with the Academy Awards). Look for Oddities on Mondays, Saturdays, and other assorted rerun times. There are plans to release cassettes--we'll let you know when we know something.
- (2) Fan names misspelled in the last issue: Jim STANGE (not "Jim Strange") and ROBERT Robles (not "Ropber" Robles). Sorry, guys. Hey--at least we don't bury our corrections in tiny print on page 799!

Dear Mr. Kieth,

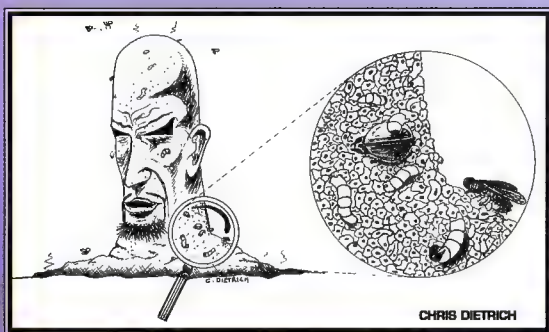
When isz die, do they become wasz?
Truly puzzled Maxx fan,
Curtis Bachek
Bayport, NY

Dear Mr. Kieth,

I want to tell you that your comic kicks ass. You have everything from original plots to realistic characters, but I've got one massive question. My teacher says that a person's drawing style and characters somehow resemble the artist, and that a person can only write from their own experiences. So my question is: if what my teacher says is true, what's up with you?!? I don't mean anything bad, I'm just curious. Thanks for your time.

Robbie Allen
Ardmore, OK

With me? With me? How about THIS?



Dear Sam,

"How can I bring him (Mr. Gone) back when his head is starting to rot?" Easy. If Mr. Gone's essence can survive in a decapitated and rotting head, then he should be able to transfer his spirit into that which is causing his head to rot (see above illustration). He could mold (pun alert) the bacteria, maggots, worms and other such bugs which are eating him into a living-conglomerate-host-vessel. This would make him a more powerful villain since he could ooze under doors or through any small openings. Of course, as his own flesh was converted into bacteria and such, he would have to feed on dead meat. I picture

him absorbing the odd dead bird or squirrel that he finds as he oozes around.

Your fan,
Chris Dietrich

Another dilemma handily solved.

Dear Samnmaxx,

Here is the Lad Done Brilliant's list of ten ways to bring back Gone. Except that you can't because he's "GONE". Right?

1. Place said head in a tray of preservative juice which can then be either carried around by a Zombie or a Sex-ghost.
2. Remove brain and insert in a glass jar with plastic lips on it.
3. The head is really an Isz. Gone still lives!
4. How about grafting the head onto a man in a gorilla suit (with optional diving helmet)?
5. Whilst lying around an alley, the head is exposed to gamma radiation/bitten by a radioactive spider/healed by Spawn.
6. Julie comes out of the shower. . .
7. Head is fired out into space and crashes onto an unpopulated planet which has been chosen as a testing ground for a life-creating process.
8. One of those worms that passes on its intelligence when cut in half and fed to other worms eats the head and is cooked in Maxx's pasta.
9. Your fans are after a crossover with Sandman, and Morph can recreate the people of his realm with the wink of an I, right? So, Gone is kind of like a dream, as is Maxx, right? Are we detecting an idea here?
10. Give the rotting head its own four-frame strip. It works for David Lynch.

The choice is yours.

To the Maxx
Adrian Brown
London, England

"Sex-ghost?!?"

Dear Sam,

I found it highly ironic that in the same issue you vowed to stop using SEX as an attention-getting device, you have Julie return pregnant. And Maxx and Sarah in bed together.

Just an observation.

Sincerely,
Augie De Bleeck Jr.

I lied.

Dear Mr. Kieth,

Hello. Well I just finished reading #14 for the tenth time and as psycho as things have been before, I must say that it's getting much worse. That's great, but I can't believe how everything is chang-



ing. I knew that "Jill" was really Julie. I thought it was pretty obvious by the way she spoke and the attitude she had. I'm just wondering if she did all the stealing and screwing to try to prove to herself that she didn't really need The Maxx or some other reason similar to that. I can't imagine why else she'd want to change. If that was the reason, then I fully understand. Sometimes when you try to convince yourself that you can make it without someone who is basically essential to your survival, you'll do nearly anything, and it will change you. If that's not the reason she did everything, then I just spilled my heart out over nothing. Nevertheless, I admire your work in this comic because the depth of this story is extremely hard to come by, and that is a quality I look for in nearly everything. Like everyone else who reads THE MAXX, I can't wait for the cartoon, and I'm also very happy that you've decided not to stop after Issue #20. Thank you for your time.

Julie Lamonica
Baton Rouge, LA

I spill my heart out every month, tortured artist that I am. Cool observations, Julie.



Dear Sammypoos,

Nifty. Linc's a pretty nice guy, huh? I mean, I sure hope if I get my hand stuck in a stupid dimensional portal thing there's someone courteous enough to cut it off with a hacksaw. Hey, at least he didn't get something a bit more important stuck, right?

So, is every protector of the Queen of Some Kind of Weird Outback a crazy thing that calls it THE MAXX, or what? Do any of these guys have even the faintest notion of what sanity is?

Oh yeah, and where can I get one of those neato masks?

In the room.

Under the bed.

Listen:

Scratch. Scratch. Scratch.

Coming from a cardboard box.

Bigger than a bread box.

What about the butter?

Bread and butter.

Bread and butter.

Bread and butter.

Toast.

Burnt toast.

Flaking crust.

No good.

Throw it out.

Put it in a box.

A cardboard box.

Feed it to the rabbit.

Under the bed.

Listen:

Scratch. Scratch. Scratch.

Come play with me, purple bunny.

I have some pez for you.

A. Dumin
Hoover, Al

One of those'd made a way better Halloween costume than dressing up as a brownie girl scout. And Sammy, how come there are only disturbed women and girls that need an outback and a protector? You're not being sexist, are you? I must assume that there are indeed some guys in your screwed up comic world that have a huge Roseanne in a mask to scare any intruders out of their outback. That's a much better thought than that you are portraying women as helpless and in need of a strong male to protect them, isn't it? (And besides, Roseanne scares me more than The Maxx's ugly mug could any day.)

Thankee much,
Ben Cauchon, teenage weirdo
Can't Remember Where, CA

(Brownie girl scout? And I'M disturbed?) Anyway, how come my male characters are all weak, too? ALL the people in THE MAXX are weak--I don't see a single self-sufficient person in Maxx that doesn't need a protector. (Actually, I thought that was the point. . .)

Hey Sam,

Admit it. You really have no idea what the hell is going on in THE MAXX, do you?

Sincerely,
Michael Hoover
Lubbock, TX

I can't believe it's taken you this long to figure that out!

Dear Sam,

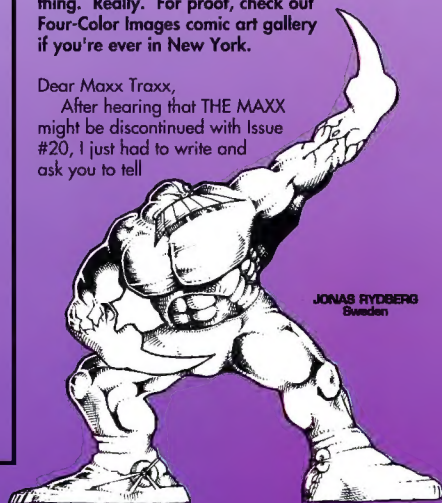
Please print something about the positive influence of comics or something so my mom can see.

Sarah Heacox
Terre Haute, IN

OK--Comics are a positive influence. . .or something. Really. For proof, check out Four-Color Images comic art gallery if you're ever in New York.

Dear Maxx Traxx,

After hearing that THE MAXX might be discontinued with Issue #20, I just had to write and ask you to tell



me it ain't so. THE MAXX is one of the few comics around to take a truly different approach to the portrayal of a superhero. The development of your characters is intricate and continual. Most importantly, I have fun reading THE MAXX--it constantly surprises me. I'd really hate to lose that experience. Until Mr. Gone becomes Mr. Here, please continue to give us readers the Maximum reading experience.

Sincerely yours,
N. Craig Olsson
Tampa, FL

Please, oh please, oh please don't stop at #20. I like THE MAXX and I will be SAD when you stop it. Please don't stop. Unless you want to.

David Grossman
Albany, CA

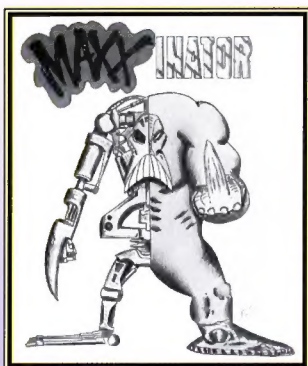
THE MAXX will continue. I need things to change but I also need them to stay the same, if that makes any sense, and I think I found a way to do both starting with Issue #21.

Dear Sam,

I have an interpretation that nobody has seemed to realize, so I guess I'll be the one to write into MAXX TRAXX and tell everyone what I think.

Everyone has assumed that because Mr. Gone and Sarah's Dad look exactly alike, they are the same person. Of course, being fans of THE MAXX, we all know that what you see is not always what is real. I think these two characters are two different people. Sarah's Dad is dead (in the real world) so he could not have appeared as Mr. Gone (in the real world). My guess is that Mr. Gone is Julie's truth, and he just happens to look like Sarah's Dad. Why, you may ask? Because Sarah's Dad must be the man that raped her and forced Julie's outback into existence.

Julie is denying her truth, and every time Mr. Gone tries to tell her, she cuts off his head. The reason his head is rotting is because she is coming to terms with what is real, so Mr. Gone is not needed anymore. Jill (Oops, I mean Julie) is learning to



KEVIN SKUBISZ
Cardova, TN

questions will be answered in the next couple of Maxx issues. If not, I will make up an ending myself, so there.

Love and friendship,
Ed Porter
Veazie, ME

Don't get out your pencil yet, Ed. Your letter's a most logical, well-thought-out analysis of why Mr. Gone is NOT Sarah's dad. Unfortunately, it's wrong (no offense. . .)

Dear Sam,

Hello there, monkey-boy. I just put down #14 and, with a sigh of comprehension, I stroked my chin in a way similar to what Holmes might do after learning an important clue.

Excellent! I have woven together a loose-knit, free-flowing dialogue and mythos that has me interested and anxious. I always look forward to the next issue while still reading the first! I think the panels you hand-painted, whether scribbled with a white-out pen or rendered with a brush, are Chocaletey.

It was a TREMENDOUS pleasure to work with you on the cartoon--as well as at Rough Draft--and I predict HUGE success. You are on your way to a sleazy life in Hollywood-- Strange agents taking you to weird coffee houses to discuss lead casting for the Maxx feature-- James Dean Conklin MTV Animation Department. From your mouth to God's ears, James Dean.

DUH! MAXX™



STEPHEN PARADIS
Gumbeo, Canada

JASON MURPHY



CHRISTIAN
HOLMES
Brooklyn Park, MN

